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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

509 DC/R

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: June 24, 1953

SUBJECT:

PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador Toriello of Guatemala

Charles R. Burrows, Acting Director, MID

COPIES TO: MID - Mr. Fisher
ARA
ARA Board
DRA

Declassified 2/9/82

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On the occasion of my courtesy visit on Ambassador Toriello, the Ambassador took the occasion to present a long exposition of relations between his country and mine, from his point of view.

The Ambassador first discussed the ideological position of his Government and the general situation in his country. He laid great stress on the unhappy condition of the Guatemalan working man and the efforts which his Government has made to improve living conditions. He spoke of the program of land expropriation and division among the campesinos, referring particularly to the United Fruit Company in this connection and offering as an example his own experience of losing about one-third of the area of a 30,000-acre finca which he recently purchased in Guatemala. He said that most of the landed classes are in opposition to this program but that he understands its purpose and is in full sympathy with the Government.

He rather plaintively asked why an obvious embargo had been placed on Guatemala by the Department of State. He said that American aviation and military missions are maintained in Guatemala but that Guatemala is unable to obtain the equipment which is necessary to make the best use of those missions. He spoke of Guatemala's friendship for the United States and its desire to have close relations. He mentioned the fact that when he was in the United Nations, for example, he always voted with the United States; he said further that Guatemala had, for example, voted in favor of UN intervention in Korea. He said the most recent instance that had come to his attention of this "embargo", although there have been many, is a purchase order which Guatemala had placed with the Atlas Powder Company; just five days ago a representative of the Atlas Powder

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Company had called on him and asked him if he knew what the trouble was, that Atlas had just received word from the Department of State that no immediate answer could be given as to the export of the material which had been ordered. The Ambassador asked, obviously without expecting an answer, what it was that the Department of State wanted from Guatemala. He denied that there is any significant Communist influence in Guatemala but suggested that there are specific things which the Department of State wants and if it could be made clear to Guatemala that relations might be improved by certain actions on the part of Guatemala, he felt sure his Government would be happy to give serious consideration to the suggestions. The Ambassador expressed appreciation for all that the United States has done for Guatemala and said that Guatemala has always responded in kind. However, if the State Department insists on implementing what seems to be its present attitude, the only self-respecting position for Guatemala is to get along alone, on a reduced scale if necessary, but in any event on an independent basis.

I offered very little in the way of comment (one reason being that I was already late for my next appointment) except to say that I was interested in his problems and would ask him to give me a few days to become better acquainted with the situation, at which time I would be anxious to go into the whole thing with him again and to discuss it at length.

CRB

ARA:RID:CBurrows:dc

GUATEMALA Security Information

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

510

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Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: June 26, 1953

SUBJECT: Relations with Guatemala

PARTICIPANTS: Guillermo Toriello Garrido, Ambassador of Guatemala
ARA - Mr. Mann
MIL - Mr. Fisher

COPIES TO: American Embassy, Guatemala (Informally)
ARA - Mr. Mann
ARA Board
DEA
ARA

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Ambassador Toriello verbally presented his Government's views on the expropriation of the United Fruit Company along the lines given in the Aide-Memoire which he left with Mr. Mann upon leaving.

Mr. Mann stated that this Government could not agree that compensation for expropriated property was just compensation merely because it was in the form and amount established by a national law. He questioned whether the payment offered the United Fruit Company constituted prompt, adequate and effective compensation as those terms were defined in international law. With respect to the company's ability to continue banana cultivation on the land remaining in its possession in Tiquisate, Mr. Mann agreed with Ambassador Toriello that the problems of Panama Disease, etc. were purely technical ones which were outside their province, but observed that he understood the company could not continue long at Tiquisate since, contrary to the Ambassador's assertion, the volcanic nature of the soil there prevented the use of the method known as flood fallowing, the only known remedy for land infected by the Panama Disease.

Mr. Mann said there was only one basic matter preventing solution of all the other problems existing between our two Governments. That was the Guatemalan Government's belief that it could successfully cooperate with the communists. Mr. Mann said communism wasn't an economic, doctrinal, or even military matter, it was a political one. This Government knew that communists the world over were agents of Soviet imperialism and

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and constituted a mortal threat to our own national existence. Ambassador Toriello said that he was against communism and that the Government of Guatemala, including President Arbenz, was against it. He said the Government intended to let the communists discredit themselves rather than force them under ground with the repressive measures used by his country's hated dictatorships. Mr. Mann said he did not suggest the abolition or restriction of civil liberties. It was not necessary to kill communists in order to remove their influence from the Government. In the United States the communists freely printed a daily newspaper and enjoyed the freedoms of other citizens of the country. He said that the U.S. Government, however, did not support communist candidates in political elections, did not afford them official facilities with which to disseminate international communist propaganda, did not appoint communists to important posts in the executive branch of the Government, did not assist communists to gain key positions in the leading political parties, from where they could wield influence far out of proportion to their numbers, did not issue diplomatic passports to communists who thereupon traveled to communist meetings in the Soviet orbit with the immunity of official status under the Government, and did not do a great many other things which he could mention and which showed that an administration which thought it was using the communists was being used by them instead. Mr. Mann said there obviously could be no improvement of relations between our countries as long as the Guatemalan Government insisted on cooperating with the communists.

During the course of the conversation which lasted over an hour and a half Ambassador Toriello declared he had documentary proof that the United Fruit Company was financing the distribution of Mr. Braden's speech at Dartmouth College which he said was an act of open enmity against his Government. He displayed a document entitled "Aviación Internacional en el Istmo Centro-Americano" by J. Parker Van Zandt, published by the Organizacion Internacional de Aviación, Montreal, which alleged on page 8 that the IRCA had prevented Aviateca service with El Salvador and was responsible for other acts against the sovereignty and interests of Guatemala. He complained of what he called an embargo on various items of export for Guatemala.

ARA:[illegible]:JAFisherwick